



Den Memories

Peoria High School Alumni Association

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Contact Info

Email: phsalumni@yahoo.org (309) 682-4854

Coaching Greats, II

By Tracy Riebel '87

In the 20's and 30's Salen Herke was the coach—of pretty much all the sports. As school structures evolved in the 40's and then into the 50's, more students became involved and sports offerings expanded. By the 1960's most of the sports had at least two levels and the main sports were playing full teams at three levels. These decades were dominated by Robertson, Whitaker, Lavery, Boyle, Juska, Salzer and Dawkins.



Dawson "Dawdy" Dawkins was head basketball coach at PHS from 1949 until 1960 taking the team to a 2nd place in state in the 1952-53 school year and ending with a 183-122 record.

Tony Juska was wrestling and football head coach from 1951-1957. His football record was 48-14. Juska inspired his athletes so much that a scholarship is given in his name by his former players to honor his memory.

Whitaker is a name well-known in the Peoria area but there were actually two Whitaker's at Peoria. Harry Whitaker and Dick Whitaker were

Tony Juska presents the Tin Can award to a member of the Manual Team after PHS defeated Manual in the 1953 Turkey Day Game. It was the first time PHS had defeated Manual since 1947. The location of the tin can is unknown after the turkey day game was discontinued in the 70's.



"Hiles Stout, all-state football and basketball champion, with football coach Tony Juska and Jim Ashby, all city football and all-state honorable mention in basketball." (*Crest* 1953) The 1953 team had the best record in the last 10 years.

both teachers and coaches at PHS. Harry went on to become principal and then superintendent. Harry graduated from Woodruff and Bradley and came to PHS to teach English and coach in 1954. While at PHS he was an assistant football coach, head baseball and basketball coach and the golf coach.

Dick Whitaker, left picture from the track page in the 1960 *Crest*, be-



came a head football coach in 1965 when Corky Robertson moved into administration. Dick Whitaker also coached basketball from 1966 until 1972 taking the team to the state finals in 1968, losing to Evanston. His overall basketball record was 77-69 according to the IHSA. He also coached the track team from 1959 until 1969 when Phil Salzer took over.

Coach Salzer, pictured right from the 1975 *Crest*, had a tremendous record as the PHS track coach from 1969 until 1989, ending with a 58-7 record. He was named 1974 track coach of the year. He also served as an assistance football coach with Coach Lavery and Coach Isaacson.

Dick Whitaker and Corky Robertson pose for a pre Turkey Day game picture. They were preparing to take on Manual for the 1960 title. Robertson was head coach and Whitaker assistant. (*Opinion*, Nov 4 1960)



When Bruce Boyle passed away in 2012, the Peoria Journal Star interviewed several of his former players and co-workers. Lonnie Schwindenhammer reported that Salzer said "he was a quality person who was a loyal coach when he was an assistant and loyal to



Corky Robertson and Dick Whitaker at the 1965 Turkey Day Game (*Crest* 1965).

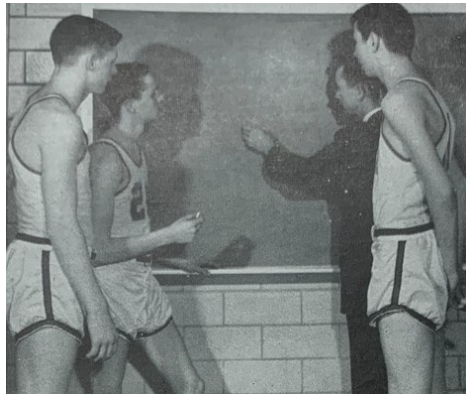
his assistants when he was head coach” (PJStar Sept 27, 2012). Boyle coached from 1960 until 1979 when he stepped down from coaching to become a counselor. He was head baseball coach starting in 1967 and became the head basketball coach in 1972 when Dick Whitaker left. Boyle took the state title in 1977 and according to the article “no team with Boyle as head coach finished with a losing record.”

“Golf coach Harry Whitaker shows Steve Sprenger the proper grip.” (1965 CREST) This was Whitakers first years as golf coach. Dick Whitaker calls a play from the sideline during a varsity game. (1970 Crest)

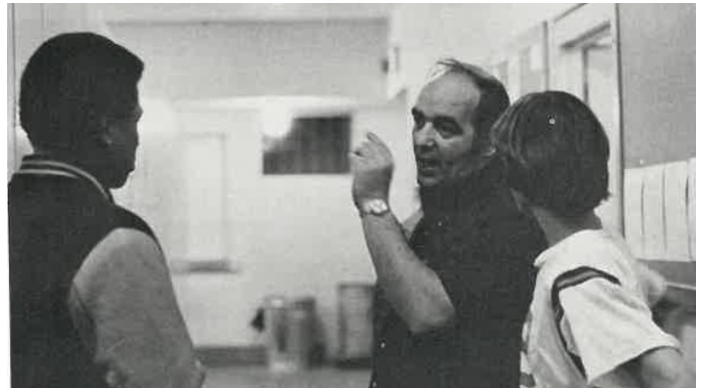


Sophomore coach Harry Whitaker shows the players the play. (Opinion March 4, 1960)

Larry Lavery talks with some students in the hall.



1967 Crest— Freshmen Baseball Team.



FIRST ROW: G. Whitaker, B. Bennett, D. VanPelt, D. West, R. Bloom. ROW 2: Coach Boyle, R. Dee, D. Yetton, P. Bryant, R. Bax-

ter, D. Nell, B. Wilson. ROW 3: C. Hendricks, M. Stenger, J. Bielenberg, J. Revis, S. Lynman, R. Malson, R. McHugh, J. Callear.